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Portland, OR 97233

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OREGON OPERATIONS OFFICE

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EPA-REGION 10

U. S. EPA
ATTN: Harbor Comments
805 SW Broadway, Suite 500
Portland, OR 97205

As a lifelong Portland resident, I know how important the Willamette River is to the city. Like everyone here, I know there have been issues with contaminants, from prior activities along the river, having settled to the bottom of the riverbed. There's been discussion for some time about how best to clean this up. I've learned just recently that the EPA has actually put forward a plan to address this issue.

This plan involves ongoing dredging of the riverbed along 10 miles of the Willamette, much of it going through downtown Portland and along the waterfront. As I understand it, this is a much more expensive and intensive plan than what the EPA has required of other Superfund sites. This reinforces my view that the EPA is not in touch with what local Portland residents and businesses think, and doesn't really have a clear idea of the impact on our lives and economy that this will have.

The EPA plan will cost potentially more than a billion dollars, much of which we will have to pay for here in Portland through higher taxes. There are other ways to attack this problem, such as letting the river continue to heal itself through nature's own restorative processes. This is happening now. Or perhaps to just dredge a small portion of the river first to see if it really works. The EPA says their plan could take seven years. This would be a waste of time, a waste of money, a great inconvenience to the people and businesses of Portland, and the environment may or may not be helped by it. Many activities go on at the waterfront for both locals and tourists that would be impacted--the Saturday farmer's markets and the Rose Festival ships coming up the river, for example.

But most of all, I don't like the idea of federal agencies like the EPA imposing their will on us, creating restrictions, and developing cleanup plans that put people out of business. It seems that they don't have our best interests in mind and are more concerned with using the power they have without considering how it affects people's lives. The comment period that is now open is the chance for us who live and work in Portland to express these very concerns. There are better ways to do the Willamette River cleanup, and more input from locals would help to develop a plan that would work without damaging our city and its residents. The EPA has to ask for our comments by law, but they don't have to listen to them. This time, I'm hoping they will.

Sincerely, (b) (6)

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